



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Recovery: It's a Family Affair – and Everyone is Invited!"

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) - Each April, the National Council on Alcoholism sponsors a campaign to raise public awareness about alcoholism and other alcohol-related problems. The theme for the 2002 campaign is "Recovery: It's a Family Affair – and Everyone's Invited!"

Families need and want help. According to the Brown University Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies, more than nine million children live with a parent dependent on alcohol and/or illicit drugs. More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism or problem drinking. Alcoholism affects a wide circle of people close to the alcoholic: relatives, friends, neighbors, employers, co-workers, classmates, teachers, doctors and community workers. And, alcoholism is closely linked to many difficult social problems including crime, homelessness, teen pregnancy and domestic violence.

Alcoholism is not an issue of morality or willpower - it is a public health issue. And while families and friends often suffer many of the same consequences of alcoholism as the alcoholic, they are often overlooked when it comes to recovery.

There are also harmful effects of alcoholism. Heavy drinking raises the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, accidents, violence, suicides, birth defects and overall mortality. Harmful and hazardous drinking is involved in about one-third of suicides, one-half of homicides, and one-third of child abuse cases. Alcohol is involved in a large proportion of unintentional deaths from falls, burns and drownings. The economic costs to society were estimated at about \$185 billion for 1998.

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Signs and symptoms of an alcohol problem are:

- Drinking to calm nerves, to forget worries or to boost a sad mood;
- Guilt about drinking;
- Unsuccessful attempts to cut down/stop drinking;
- Lying about or hiding drinking habits;
- Causing harm to oneself or someone else as a result of drinking;
- Needing to drink increasingly greater amounts in order to achieve desired effect;
- Feeling irritable, resentful or unreasonable when not drinking;
- Medical, social, family, or financial problems caused by drinking.

“Most patients and families believe that if symptoms are not prevalent, then no problem exists,” says Richard Moore, Manager of COMCARE’s Addiction Treatment Services. “But early intervention is very important. The disease of alcoholism is a progressive disease, and the longer it is left untreated, the more difficult treatment and recovery becomes.”

All family members are encouraged to take time to learn more about alcoholism, and to investigate recovery throughout the month of April.

If you live in Sedgwick County and would like to talk with a professional about alcoholism and treatment, you can call COMCARE, Sedgwick County’s Community Mental Health Center, at 832-0852.

Source: “Join Together Online”

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